

# Cultivating a Safety Culture

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## What is Safety Culture

- **Safety culture** is the ways in which **safety** is managed in the workplace, and often reflects "the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values that employees share in relation to **safety**". In other words, "the way we do **safety** around here".

– Wikipedia

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# Safety Culture

Companies may produce almost identical products but their safety cultures are most likely very different.

## Company A

*General attitude often is that accidents are unforeseen incidents that happen that can't be prevented...so putting effort into safety doesn't change the outcome.*

## Company B

*General attitude especially among top managers is that they can prevent accidents!*

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## Safety Culture

- Characteristics of Company A
  - No written safety program
  - Not using safety tools (balanced scorecard etc.)
  - No new hire orientation
  - No safety committee
  - No safety toolbox meetings
  - No safety enforcement
  - No accident investigation

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## Safety Culture

- Characteristics of Company B
  - Written safety program
  - Safety tools (balanced scorecard etc.) are being used
  - Aggressive new hire safety orientation
  - Well functioning safety committee
  - Regular safety toolbox meetings
  - Daily safety involvement & enforcement (risk assessment)
  - Accident/Incident investigation

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# Safety Culture

Studies have shown that a strong safety culture can help to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace, injuries and illnesses.

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## Safety Culture Traits

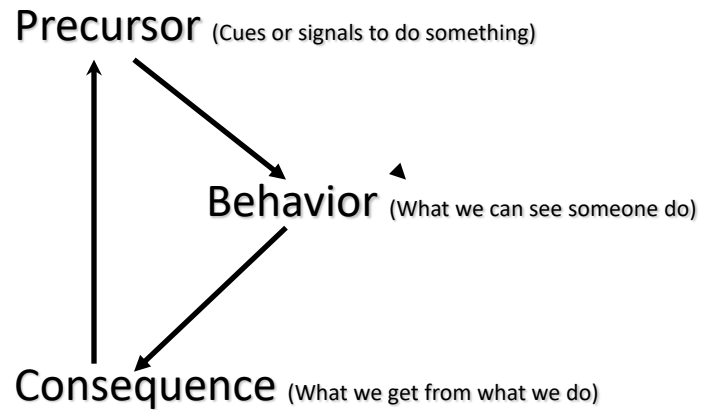
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Leadership Safety Values and Actions	Problem Identification and Resolution	Personal Accountability
Leaders demonstrate a commitment to safety in their decisions and behaviors	Issues potentially impacting safety are promptly identified, fully evaluated, and promptly addressed and corrected commensurate with their significance	All individuals take personal responsibility for safety
Work Processes	Continuous Learning	Environment for Raising Concerns
The process of planning and controlling work activities is implemented so that safety is maintained	Opportunities to learn about ways to ensure safety are sought out and implemented	A safety conscious work environment is maintained where personnel feel free to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation, intimidation, harassment or discrimination
Effective Safety Communications	Respectful Work Environment	Questioning Attitude
Communications maintain a focus on safety	Trust and respect permeate the organization	Individuals avoid complacency and continually challenge existing conditions and activities in order to identify discrepancies that might result in error or inappropriate action

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## Behavior Cycle



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## Consequence Structure

- Positive
  - We get wanted results
  - We avoid unwanted results
- Negative
  - We get unwanted results
  - We don't get wanted results

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## What brings about a negative outcome?...

- If we don't evaluate the processes we can't correct discrepancies
- Process discrepancies create compromise
- Compromise creates process breakdowns
- Process breakdowns create unintended outcomes (Incidents)

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- Measuring Safety Culture

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# Safety Culture Assessment

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Safety Culture Assessment:  
A New WCF S&H Tool

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## A Data-Based Evaluation of the Relationship between Occupational Safety and Operating Performance

Dr. Anthony Veltri  
Associate Professor, Oregon State University  
Journal of S&H Research  
Spring 2007

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## Hypothesis: Safety performance is related to operating performance

- An employee/management safety perception tool is used to test the hypothesis
- An employee/manager “disconnect” in safety perceptions is the key indicator
- The “disconnect” is manifested by differing answers to the same questions regarding safety issues imbedded within an operations management survey
- “IF safety perceptions are good and agreed upon by employees and management, operational performance should also be good”***

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## Study Results

- as safety disconnect increases internal scrap and rework increases with the converse true also
- as safety disconnect increases internal reliability and durability performance decrease
- as safety disconnect increases so do external costs of production

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## Take-Aways

- the argument for good safety practices as good business is supported
- “safety disconnects” between employees and management are a sign that an organization needs to evaluate efforts and can be used as a barometer to measure improvement

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## The WCF Safety Culture Assessment

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### **An Excel-Based Program**

- includes surveys, automatic tabulation and graphing
- survey can be administered in 5-10 minutes per person
- surveys are coded to differentiate between employees and managers

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**Safety Culture Assessment Tool**  
*Questionnaire*

Client: \_\_\_\_\_ Consultant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 02/01/2018

Manager/Supervisor ☐ Worker ☐ Survey# \_\_\_\_\_

1. I feel that my workspace and the company in general is a safe place to work.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
2. Our company has an effective and fully functioning safety and health program in place.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
3. My individual participation in the program is crucial to its success.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
4. Workers have the chance to regularly offer ideas about how the program can be improved.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
5. When an unsafe hazard or situation is discovered, it is usually taken care of quickly.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
6. Top management of the company is frequently and visibly involved in promoting and encouraging safety efforts.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
7. Accidents happen most often from hazards related to the work process, rather than employee carelessness.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
8. Our company has a good record of controlling work related accidents and illnesses.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
9. Our company takes the time to train new workers and make sure they work safely from day one.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
10. I feel that my supervisor cares about my safety and health on the job.  
Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

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